

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 07073 141630Z

41/54

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6126

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BOGOTA 7073

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR MRN (READS 7073 VIS A VIS 7037)

E.O. 11652: "/A

TAGS: PGOV, EGEN, CO

SUBJECT: MINISTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESIGNS

1. PRESIDENT LOPEZ YESTERDAY ACCEPTED THE RESIGNATION OF JORGE RAMIREZ OCAMPO AS MINISTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND IMMEDIATELY NAMED DIEGO MORENO JARAMILLO AS HIS REPLACEMENT. A CONSERVATIVE LIKE RAMIREZ, MORENO UNTIL RECENTLY WAS GOVERNOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF QUINDIO AND PRIOR TO THAT SERVED BRIEFLY AS VICE MINISTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNDER RAMIREZ OCAMPO.

2. RAMIREZ OCAMPO'S LETTER OF RESIGNATION, PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT NEARLY A MONTH AGO, EXPRESSED HIS IRREVOCABLE DECISION TO RETIRE FROM THE CABINET FOR STRICTLY PERSONAL REASONS. LOPEZ'S LEGTHY REPLY WENT WELL BEYOND MERELY ACCEPTING THE RESIGNATION, VMOVING A REVIEW OF RAMIREZ OCAMP'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN OFFICE WHICH THE PRESIDENT DESCRIBED AS COMPETENT AND BRILLIANT.

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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 07073 141630Z

3. CABINET CHANGES MIDWAY THROUGH AN ADMINISTRATION ARE A FACT OF LIFE IN COLOMBIA AND NOT NECESSARILY AN INDICATION OF A BUDDING GOVERNMENTAL CRISIS. RAMIREZ OCAMPO'S DEPARTURE IS PROBABLY THE FIRST OF SEVERAL, WITH OTHER LIKELY CANDIDATES BEING THE MINISTERS OF EDUCATION, LABOR AND FINANCE. WE CAN ALSO EXPECT TO SEE SOME CHANGES AT THE SUB-CABINET LEVEL AND IN THE DECENTRALIZED AGENCIES. WITHIN THE PAST MONTH, THE VICE MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE AND MINES AND ENERGY HAVE RESIGNED (BOTH GO ON TO BETTER PAYING POSITIONS OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT) AS HAS THE DIRECTOR OF ICA. DREXLER

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